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For Immediate Release

FCC PROPOSES EXPANDING FLEXIBLE USE OF MID-BAND SPECTRUM

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission has taken another step toward promoting American leadership in the next generation of wireless connectivity, or 5G, expanding high-speed broadband access across the United States and closing the digital divide. The Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today identifies new opportunities for flexible use in up to 500 megahertz of mid-band spectrum between 3.7 and 4.2 GHz. Mid-band spectrum is well-suited for next-generation wireless services.

In recognition of the ever-growing demand for spectrum-based services and to facilitate the development of advanced wireless services, including 5G, the proposals set forth several steps toward making more mid-band spectrum available for terrestrial fixed and mobile broadband use. The Commission's actions today build on its 2017 Notice of Inquiry, which began an evaluation of whether various spectrum bands between 3.7 GHz and 24 GHz can be made available for flexible use.

The Order will require Fixed Satellite Service earth stations operating in the 3.7-4.2 GHz band to certify the accuracy of existing registration and license information and will collect additional information from space station licensees on their operations in the band to assist the Commission and commenters in developing a clearer understanding of how the band is currently being used. The Commission will then use this information to evaluate the most efficient way to drive the deployment of mid-band spectrum for mobile services and more intensive fixed services.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking advances the Commission's goal of making spectrum available for new wireless uses while treating existing users in the band fairly. The Notice proposes to add a mobile (except aeronautical mobile) allocation to all 500 megahertz in the band and seeks comment on various proposals for transitioning part or all of the band for flexible use, working up from 3.7 GHz, including market-based, auction, and alternative mechanisms.

The Notice also seeks comment on allowing more intensive point-to-multipoint fixed use in some portion of the band, on a shared basis, working down from 4.2 GHz and on how to define and protect incumbent users from harmful interference, and it seeks comment on service and technical rules that would enable efficient and intensive use by any new services in the band.

Action by the Commission July 12, 2018 by Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 18-91). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel approving and issuing separate statements.

GN Docket No. 18-122, 17-183; RM Nos. 11791, 11778

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